



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of California*

501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, California 95814

916/554-2700
Fax 916/554-2900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2, 2003

**TWO BROTHERS CONVICTED OF FIREARMS CHARGES
IN CONNECTION WITH MARIJUANA MANUFACTURING OPERATIONS**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced that two brothers, Shaun Tillotson, 37, of Fair Oaks, California, and Eric Tillotson, 38, of Sacramento, California, pleaded guilty today before United States District Court Judge Edward J. Garcia to violations of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(A)(i), possession of three firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking crimes, namely, a conspiracy to manufacture marijuana and the manufacture of marijuana. The maximum penalty for a conviction of this statute is a minimum of five years and up to life imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000, five years supervised release, and a special penalty assessment of \$ 100. District Court Judge Garcia set sentencing for both Tillotsons on November 21, 2003 at 10:00 a.m.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Samuel Wong, who prosecuted the case, during the investigation that led to the convictions, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, United States Forest Service, and El Dorado County Sheriff's Office served a federal search warrant on August 7, 2001, and discovered an outdoors marijuana garden on a rural lot owned by Shaun Tillotson near Darling Cabin Road, in Garden Valley, California. On August 29, 2001, DEA agents executed a federal search warrant at the home of Shaun Tillotson in Fair Oaks. DEA Agents discovered an indoor marijuana grow operation in the master bedroom closet. There was a loaded Colt .32 caliber revolver on the closet shelf directly above the marijuana plants. In the same closet, there was an unloaded Norinco MAK-90 Sporter 7.62 millimeter semi-automatic rifle together with a rotary drum magazine containing approximately 70 rounds of ammunition. Between the mattress and box spring approximately 5 feet away from the marijuana plants in the closet was a loaded Taurus .357 magnum caliber revolver. In the garage, agents discovered marijuana grow equipment and supplies, including rock wool, lava rock, and over 200 used plastic pots containing dirt and marijuana plant material. It appeared that the garage was in the process of being subdivided by additional walls to make marijuana grow rooms inside the garage. A truck parked on the house driveway contained camouflaged clothing and gloves with marijuana plant residue and an odor of growing marijuana.

During the investigation, Eric Tillotson was interviewed by DEA agents, and admitted that he was responsible for both marijuana grow operations. He said that Shaun Tillotson was storing marijuana grow equipment and supplies for him at his request. As part of his plea agreement, Eric Tillotson stipulated that he knew and could reasonably foresee that Shaun Tillotson would use the three firearms to protect their joint marijuana grow operation at Shaun Tillotson's house. Eric Tillotson also agreed to his criminal liability as a coconspirator under federal law to the firearms violation.

Mr. Scott expressed his appreciation to the DEA, U.S. Forest Service, and El Dorado County Sheriff's Office for their investigative assistance on this case.

###